

Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 1-45 were previously canceled. Claims 46-80 are allowed. Claim 81 has been cancelled. New claim 82 has been added. Please note that all claims currently pending and under consideration in the referenced application are shown below. Please enter these claims as presented. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-45. (Canceled)

46. (Original) A method of encoding acknowledgement channels in base stations of a wireless communication system, the method comprising:

receiving a reverse link traffic channel data frame from a remote terminal;
allowing absence of acknowledgement (ACK) signals on an acknowledgement channel of a best base station to indicate that quality of the received data frame is good;
allowing absence of negative acknowledgement (NAK) signals on acknowledgement channels of secondary base stations to indicate that quality of the received data frame is bad;
encoding the ACK signals and the NAK signals, and transmitting the encoded signals on the acknowledgement channels during a switching period.

47. (Original) The method of claim 46, wherein the switching period is configured as a duration of a soft-handoff.

48. (Original) The method of claim 46, wherein the best base station is selected based on forward link channel quality.

49. (Original) The method of claim 48, wherein the forward link channel quality includes a strongest forward link pilot signal detected by a remote terminal.

50. (Original) The method of claim 46, wherein the best base station is selected based on reverse link power control information.

51. (Original) The method of claim 50, wherein the reverse link power control information includes power control (PC) commands.

52. (Original) The method of claim 51, further comprising:
enabling the remote terminal to determine that a base station is the best base station if a difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands exceeds a first threshold.

53. (Original) The method of claim 52, further comprising:
enabling a base station to determine that it is the best base station if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands exceeds a second threshold.

54. (Original) The method of claim 53, wherein the second threshold is larger than the first threshold.

55. (Original) The method of claim 54, further comprising:
enabling a base station to determine that it is the secondary base station if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands is below a third threshold.

56. (Original) The method of claim 55, wherein the third threshold is smaller than the first threshold.

57. (Original) The method of claim 55, further comprising:
transmitting both ACK and NAK signals explicitly if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands is above the third threshold but is below the second threshold.

58. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for wireless communication comprising:

means for receiving a reverse link traffic channel data frame from a remote terminal;
means for allowing absence of acknowledgement (ACK) signals on an acknowledgement channel of a best base station to indicate that quality of the received data frame is good;
means for allowing absence of negative acknowledgement (NAK) signals on acknowledgement channels of secondary base stations to indicate that quality of the received data frame is bad;
means for encoding the ACK signals and the NAK signals, and transmitting the encoded signals on the acknowledgement channels during a switching period.

59. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 58, wherein the switching period is configured as a duration of a soft-handoff.

60. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 58, wherein the best base station is selected based on forward link channel quality.

61. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the forward link channel quality includes a strongest forward link pilot signal detected by a remote terminal.

62. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 58, wherein the best base station is selected based on reverse link power control information.

63. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 62, wherein the reverse link power control information includes power control (PC) commands.

64. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 63, further comprising:
means for enabling the remote terminal to determine that a base station is the best base station if a difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands exceeds a first threshold.

65. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 64, further comprising:

means for enabling a base station to determine that it is the best base station if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands exceeds a second threshold.

66. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 65, wherein the second threshold is larger than the first threshold.

67. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 66, further comprising:
means for enabling a base station to determine that it is the secondary base station if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands is below a third threshold.

68. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 67, wherein the third threshold is smaller than the first threshold.

69. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 67, further comprising:
transmitting both ACK and NAK signals explicitly if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands is above the third threshold but is below the second threshold.

70. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable storage device containing instructions for executing the following steps:

- receiving a reverse link traffic channel data frame from a remote terminal;
- allowing absence of acknowledgement (ACK) signals on an acknowledgement channel of a best base station to indicate that quality of the received data frame is good;
- allowing absence of negative acknowledgement (NAK) signals on acknowledgement channels of secondary base stations to indicate that quality of the received data frame is bad;
- encoding the ACK signals and the NAK signals, and transmitting the encoded signals on the acknowledgement channels during a switching period.

71. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage device of claim 70, wherein the switching period is configured as a duration of a soft-handoff.

72. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage device of claim 70, wherein the best base station is selected based on forward link channel quality.

73. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage device of claim 72, wherein the forward link channel quality includes a strongest forward link pilot signal detected by a remote terminal.

74. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage device of claim 70, wherein the best base station is selected based on reverse link power control information.

75. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage device of claim 74, wherein the reverse link power control information includes power control (PC) commands.

76. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage device of claim 75, further comprising instructions for executing the following steps:

enabling the remote terminal to determine that a base station is the best base station if a difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands exceeds a first threshold.

77. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage device of claim 76, further comprising instructions for executing the following steps:

enabling a base station to determine that it is the best base station if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands exceeds a second threshold.

78. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage device of claim 77, wherein the second threshold is larger than the first threshold.

79. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage device of claim 78, further comprising instructions for executing the following steps:

enabling a base station to determine that it is the secondary base station if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands is below a third threshold.

80. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage device of claim 79, wherein the third threshold is smaller than the first threshold.

81. (Canceled).

82. (New) A base station of a wireless communication system, the method comprising:

an RF front end configured to receive a reverse link traffic channel data frame from a remote terminal; and

a controller configured to:

allow absence of acknowledgement (ACK) signals on an acknowledgement channel to indicate that quality of the received data frame is good when the base station operates as a best base station;

allow absence of negative acknowledgement (NAK) signals on acknowledgement channels to indicate that quality of the received data frame is bad when the base station operates as a secondary base station; and

encode the ACK signals and the NAK signals; and

a transmitter configured to transmit the encoded signals on the acknowledgement channels during a switching period.